Claims 1, 7-11, 13-14, and 20-24 are pending in the present application. Claims 2-6, 12, and 15-19 are canceled. Claims 1, 7, 10, 13, 14, 20, and 23 are amended. Applicants are not conceding in this application that these claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments are only for facilitating expeditious issuance of the application. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications. By this response, independent claims 1, 13, and 14 are amended to further clarify the claims and overcome rejections under U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Support for the amendments to claims 1, 13, and 14 is located at least on page 3, lines 3-15; on page 9, lines 1-7; on page 19, line 1, through page 19, line 18; on page 31, lines 13-26; and in **Figure 6**. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

The cited references do not teach or suggest "allocating think time for each problem instance variant of the plurality of predictable potential next events into separate think time partitions within each time slot for determining a best solution for each problem instance variant of the plurality of the predictable potential next events, wherein an amount of think time is calculated for each problem instance variant of the plurality of the predictable potential next events, wherein each time slot is divided into a plurality of separate think time partitions, wherein allocating think time for each problem instance variant of the plurality of predictable potential next events includes: reserving a first amount of time for performing an initial algorithm; allocating a second amount of time for performing a randomized algorithm, wherein the randomized algorithm is a next algorithm; during each allocated think time partition, allocating resources for a problem instance variant of a predicted next event at a predicted time at which the predicted next event may occur, wherein allocating the resources for the problem instance variant of the predicted next event includes: executing the initial algorithm to form a preliminary solution; recording a seed value of zero to indicate that a current solution is the preliminary solution; and repeatedly executing the randomized algorithm until an event occurs or the second amount of time expires; responsive to the randomized algorithm forming a solution that is better than a previous solution, updating the seed value," as recited in amended claims 1, 12, and 13.

I.   Interview Summary

Applicants request a telephone interview to discuss the claim amendments presented in this Preliminary Amendment. Applicants thank Examiner Meng Yao Zhe for this consideration.

These claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

Date: December 10, 2007

                                        Respectfully submitted,

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